

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, May 10. 1692.

SIRS,

Quest. 1. I Have been troubled with a violent racking pain in the Pit of my Stomach, which returns like the Fits sometimes of a Tertian, other times of a Quartan Ague, at a precise hour. It continues sometimes 3, sometimes 4, and rarely 10 or 12 hours together. Biting a Fermentation in the part affected, I am neither hotter nor colder than at other times: Nor is there either by Pulse, Urine, or otherwise, any Indication of Illness either before, in, or after the Fit: but I am in good and even Temper, I have a good Appetite, and digest well, and sleep well, till the Fit takes me, (as usually it does) about 2 in the morning, when I am forced immediately to rise, and walk up and down, (for I can't sit nor lye down) till 'tis over. All the space where the pain lies may be covered with the palm of ones hand: In the Summer the skin without looks brown and tawny, 'tis discoloured, and not so sensible as other parts, but 'tis not so in Winter; (I never had the Gout, nor do I eat Suppers) I earnestly do desire your Opinion as to the Cause of this Distemper, and as to the Name and Thing? And withall whether there is any good Grounds to hope for a Cure; (the Distemper having notwithstanding Advice and Means used, been off and on near 3 years) and if there is, by what Regimen and General Means?

Ans. There may have been such a Case, but not an Author that we meet with has left so much as the least footstep of it. It is work for a whole Colledge of Physicians to assign the precise Reason; however, in order to discover it, if possible, since our Paper spreads thro' all England, we desire all able Physicians, Surgeons, and other persons that delight in that practice, to give us a parallel Case if they can, and if cur'd or not; what has been apply'd in order thereto, and what has been the success; or of any other unusual distemper in general, since it may be of great use to the Publick, the service of which is the chief design of this Paper.

Quest. 2. I know an Emperick in the Country who stops bleeding at the Nose, and stanches all manner of Hemorrhages, when all other means fail, only by saying over these following words, (either present with the Patient, or within some miles distance)

*Here the party is named both by Christian and Surname.

In the Blood of Adam Sin was taken,
In the Blood of Christ it was all to shaken.
And by the same Blood I do thee charge,
That the Blood of*—run no longer at large.

The words you are left free to conceal or publish, according to your Resolution of the Case: Pray give us your Opinion of the lawfulness of it, and how 'tis effected; that it has been done frequently, I am assured is matter of Fact?

Ans. The preceding Case may be Natural, but this is not, however this is much more unaccountable. Our Saviour tells us in a certain place, that many shall come unto me in that day, and say unto me, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and done many wondrous works? But I will say unto them, Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity; whence (as also from another place that speaks of it as matter of fact) 'tis incontestably true, that as some good men by a true Faith in Jesus Christ can do Miracles; so in some ill men there's a Faith strong enough to do the same; of this number we reckon all those wicked ridiculous things call'd Charms for Tooth-ach, Agues, Thefts, &c. we doubt not but some persons may use such things (as the Gentleman mentioned in the Question) out of no ill design, and because they think there can be no wickedness in it; but we are very certain that such persons have an officious Devil attending 'em,

and in their first Tryals lends his assistance, and brings the thing to pass by Natural means, till a vain unaccountable Faith is so strong as to perfect such things without his immediate assistance. Those know but little that are not satisfy'd that the Devil is more skillful in Nature than any Physician whatever; how easie can he convey prepar'd Spirits of Vegetables, or other methods, when the Party is asleep, or confound a persons Senses so as to make him passive enough for any reception in a Friends shape, &c. for God often permits such things; and if so, 'tis plain he can cure the Tooth-ach, stop Blood, or any other Natural Remedy. In examining the Lives of Negromancers, and such as have given up themselves to the Devil, we find they began with such small things as these, till hardened in their unaccountable Follies, they proceeded higher. If there's such Companions, and so much danger in these things, we need not add, that a very particular Repentance is necessary to all such as are guilty of them, or any way concerned in them. Under this Head may come such as make tryals for Sweethearts, turn the Key and Bible for Thieves, enquire into future Events: In short, all that great pack of Fools or Knaves in this Town, and elsewhere, that pretend by Judicial Astrology to resolve Cases of Marriage, Death, Travelling, Riches, Poverty, &c. and can't tell at the same time any little Accident whatever that will befall themselves.

There are two more Questions sent by the same hand, which shall be answered very shortly, as to the last about the Whole Duty of Man, 'tis done already.

Quest. 3. In Mr. Baxter's Discourse about Witches, he tells of a Dog that appear'd to a Man in the shape of a Flea: Now his Reputation in the World is such, that I am rather conscious of my own misunderstanding, than his misreciting the Story, and you having advanced something on this Subject, I desire your Information upon this passage: My Stupidness will cause you more trouble, if this be answer'd to my mind; if not, I must seek elsewhere.

J. G.

Ans. Yes by all means do so, for Athens serves no body for fear; when your refuge has laugh'd at you, it may teach you more Modesty, and when you have learnt that, you shall have our Answer.

Quest. 4. Gentlemen, I had once contracted a Friendship of the strictest kind, and highest degree with a Young Lady, who is (without Flattery) one of the Noblest of her Sex: Our Passions, Fortunes, and every thing else were equal, that we seem'd design'd for each other; yet if there is such a thing as Platonick Love, that was all that possess'd our Souls, at least that we knew, and when all else concluded us Lovers (in the strictest sence) we only term'd our selves Friends, and were so far from Love, that we ridicul'd any thing tending thereto: But my occasions calling me to Spain, (where I continued about a twelvemonth) we were forc'd to part, tho' with grief to both; during my absence I was possess'd with a strange kind of Passion, which I knew not what to make of: Her Idea was always with me, and tho' we continued a correspondence by Letters, nothing could satisfy me till my return, as soon as I saw her, I threw my self into her Arms, and express'd the highest passion I was capable of; she surpris'd at my behaviour was silent for a while, but then receiv'd me with a sigh, and told me her Parents had promis'd her to another Person, and that tho' she lov'd me, yet thinking I was not subject to the same Passion, had given her Consent, and they were to be married within a Month. But to be short, after some discourse I left her, and happily met my Rival in a private Field; I told him our Circumstances, and endeavour'd to dispute him out of her; but when that would not do, I drew, and told him



he must fight me, or quit his pretensions to her; we fought, I wounded and disarm'd him, but gave him his Life, which he requited with surrendering his Right in her to me; he quitting her without discovering the Reasons, I openly courted her, and gained her Parents Consent, and am now in Expectation of the happy day. — And now Gentlemen I would know of you:

1. Whether there is or can be such a thing as Platonic Love?
2. Whether I did ill in fighting my Rival, since without it we had all 3 been made miserable?

Ans. Plato was surnam'd *Ἰδαιος*, because of his knowledge in Divinity, and abstracted Speculations. Aristotle was his Scholar, and by reason of his acute knowledge in material things, he was call'd *ῥατῖος*, he being a Successor of Plato, and envious of his Reputation, out of scorn call'd all abstracted Notions. Platonic, which soon got an ill Reputation being used as a Jest, tho' in truth Aristotle was the Fool in that, and Plato the wise man, as may be seen by comparing their Morals together. The word Platonic yet keeps up its abused Sense, and Custom gives us a ridiculous Notion of it. The Idea that we have of it now is mostly confin'd to an uncommon Love, viz. That betwixt two different Sexes, which if it had been between two of the same Sex, might be well express'd by the Term of Friendship. That there is such a thing, we have several Instances to convince us; the latest in print is to be found in the Gentlemans Journal for the last Month, express'd by a Copy of Verses writ by a Platonic Gentleman a little before the death of his Mistress and himself: The Verses were these.

Since Love hath kindled in our Eyes
A chaste and holy Fire,
It were a Sin if thou or I
Should let this Flame expire.

What tho' our Bodies never meet,
Love's Fuel's more Divine,
The fixt Stars by their twinkling greet,
And yet they never joyn.

False Meteors who still change their place
Tho' they seem fair and bright,
Yet when they covet to embrace,
Fall down and lose their Light.

If thou perceive thy Flame decay,
Come light thy Eyes at mine,
And when I feel mine fade away
I'll take fresh Fires at thine.

Thus when we shall preierv from wast
The Flames of our desires,
No Vestals shall maintain more chaste
Nor more immortal Fires.

Those that have a mind to know the whole Story, and the fatal effects this Copy of Verses had on 'em both, may consult the said Journal.

Ans. 2. Yes certainly, we are forbidden to do ill that good may come of it; 'tis an ill act to assault any person, except in ones just defence, and a degree of Murder. We wish you as much happiness in your Marriage as you promise your self, but we don't understand how any Gentlemen can lose his right to any thing because another has a longer Sword.

Quest. 5. A Young Widow, and her deceased Husbands Brother have ingressed into their only hands a considerable and beneficial Trade, to prevent its spreading into more hands, have a mind to marry together, encouraged by several Presidents of such Marriages in the same County. To that purpose they have consulted some of their own Casuists, (Dissenters from the Church of England) who tell them that it is no where forbidden in the Word of God, and therefore no Sin, as appears by Christs Answer Mat. 8. 22. to the Sadduces Question, wherein he reproves not the Woman for marrying the 7 Brothers one after another. Likewise that altho' this Widow has a Daughter living, it being no Male Heir, she may marry her deceased Husbands Brother, to raise him an Heir.

The matter requires your speedy Answer, or else it may come too late: If you think it lawful, by what Law, and for what Reason: If you think it not lawful, in what places of Scripture is it forbidden. Include also in your Answer by what Statute it is prohibited, and what is the Penalty; likewise what punishment can the Ecclesiastical Court inflict on the Parties so marrying? and whether the late Act for Liberty of Conscience doth not hinder the Ecclesiastical Court from prosecuting the Parties so married?

Ans. This is a very perplext Case, but it appears to us to be absolutely unlawful, from Lev. 20. 21. If a man shall take his Brothers Wife, it is an unclean thing, he hath uncovered his Brothers Nakedness, they shall be childless. This is the general Rule laid down, and there's but one Exception, to wit, if a Brother dye without Issue, then the second Brother is oblig'd to raise up Issue (if he can) to his dead Brother; and that this was not only meant of a Natural Brother, but the next Male of kin, is plain from the passage of Boaz and Ruth. Now the Exception from this General Rule supposes only a want of Issue, and not a Male expressly, and therefore it appears to us, that a Daughter invalidates the Exception, and that the first General Rule stands in force. But we shall consider further of this Matter, and in a little time give our Judgment upon the whole. As to the latter part of the Questions, they ought not to be answered before it be determin'd whether the act it self be lawful or not.

☞ The Questions concerning *Adam*, period set to the Life of Man, supposititious writings mentioned by *Dupin*, unanswer'd Papers sent to the *Raven* in the *Poultry*, *Olim Roma tuos*, Diameter of a Circle, Area of an Oblique angled plain Triangle, History of the *Athenaeus*, *Tacitus*, &c. shall be all answer'd next *Satur*.

☞ The *Double Descent*, A Poem, is publisht this Morning. Printed for *John Dunton* at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*.

Advertisements.

HAVING bought of the late Undertaker of the *Works of the Learned* his right to a Monthly Journal of Books, the said Journal will be now carried on by a *London Divine*, (under the Title of *The compleat Library, or News for the Ingenious*, &c.) who will continue it monthly, beginning with this present *May*. — This Journal is to consist of 9 Sheets, 3 whereof will be allotted for *Original Pieces*, the other 4 for *Historical Accounts* of the choicest Books printed in *England*, and in the *Foreign Journals*, and the remaining 2 are to contain *Notes* on the memorable passages happening monthly, as also the *State of Learning* in the *World*; this will be the Authors constant method, which he is obliged to prosecute for several just and weighty reasons, &c. — At the end of every six months there will be added to this New Journal 2 Alphabetical Tables, one of the Books, and the other of the Matters. — In the first *JOURNAL* will be inserted an *Original Piece* concerning the integrity and purity of the *Hebrew Bible*.

☞ THE History of the *Athenian Society*, for resolving all nice and curious Questions, by a Gentleman who got secret Intelligence of their whole Proceedings. To which is prefixt several Poems written by *Mr. Tate*, *Mr. Motteux*, *Mr. Richardson*, and others. In this History you have an account of the Novelty, Advantage, Inventor and Occasion of this useful Undertaking; the Difficulties that attend it; the Noble daring of the first Author, with a particular account of the rest. The Reasons why this Society assumed the Title of *Athenian*: The Progress, Methods and Performances of the Society when establish'd; a prospect of what the *World* is suddenly to expect from it, and likewise what it has reason to hope for hereafter, with several other particulars. This History is printed on the same size with the *Athenian Mercury*, that it might bind up with the Entire set for the Year 91.

Sold by *Richard Baldwin* in *Warwick-lane*, and by most Bookfellers in *London* and *Westminster*. price 1 s.

LONDON, Printed for *John Dunton* at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*, 1692.